

Iowa Fighting Power Afloat

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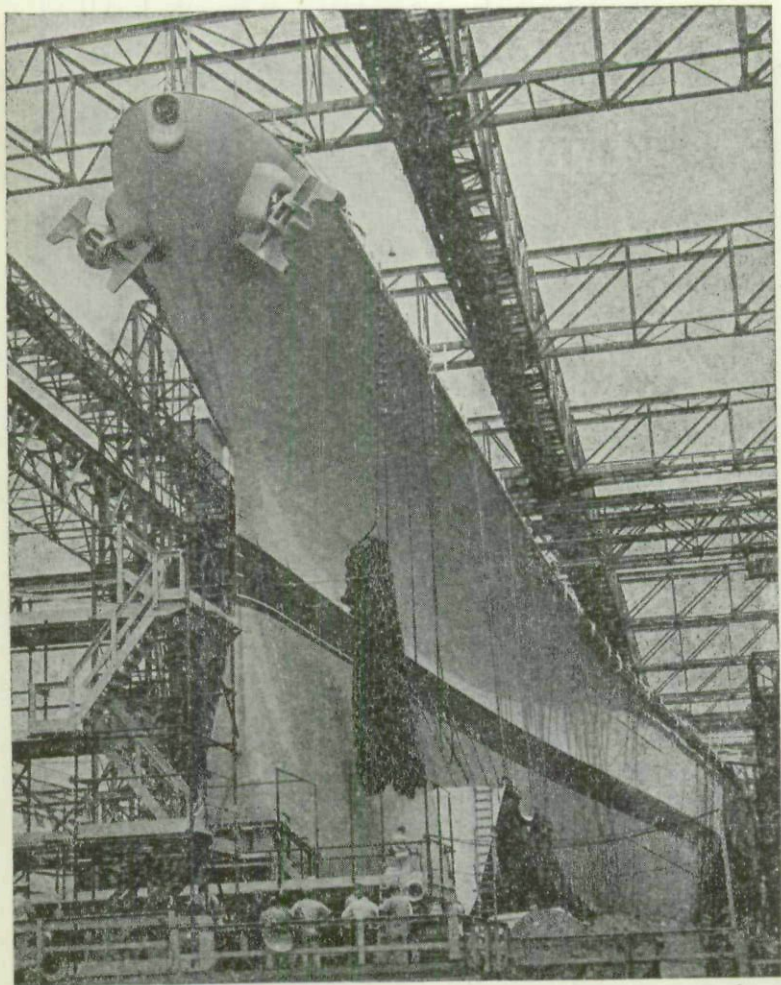
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Official U. S. Navy Photograph

U. S. S. IOWA IV

Forward view of bow just before launching at the New York Navy Yard August 27, 1942, showing drag chains placed to retard movement at the time of launching; latest and largest United States war vessel; 45,000 tons, capable of 30 knots speed, with 16-inch guns for main battery.

Iowa Fighting Power Afloat

Before the close of the year 1943, the fighting power of the United States navy will receive a material addition by the commissioning of another U. S. S. Iowa, the fourth vessel of the navy authorized to bear that name.

The battleship was launched at the New York Navy Yard, Brooklyn, August 27, 1942. The ceremonies were of the usual kind. There were speeches, music, telegrams, cheering thousands and the traditional breaking of a bottle over the bow. The address on behalf of the navy was from Rear Admiral E. J. Marquart. In honor of the state of Iowa, the "christening" was by Mrs. Henry A. Wallace, wife of the vice president. The launching was according to program. The work of outfitting for service was continued and is in progress, and it is planned to commission the ship in February.

The fourth Iowa was authorized by Congress May 25, 1939, and the keel was laid June 27, 1940. It is 880 feet long, of the 45,000-ton class, with 16-inch guns for the main battery, and her launching weight was the greatest in United States history. The battleship will displace enough water to flood 46 acres of land one foot deep. The material for the ship was supplied to the navy yard in various forms under contract by thirty-four states.

On the occasion of the launching of the fourth Iowa, Gov. Geo. A. Wilson, of Iowa, sent the following telegram which was read:

"The people of Iowa in pride of patriotism and confidence of triumph for the right, follow the new U. S. S. Iowa as she glides into the water of the troubled oceans and is made ready for the fight to uphold the freedom of the seas. May this new Iowa be another flagship to carry the message of the Americas round the world. Thousands of our boys from farms and shops and humble homes are cheerfully joining the ranks of the Navy, and back of them there is a united and determined people wholly committed to the all-out effort needed to assure a victory for the peace we love. Godspeed the new Iowa and give her the strength to overcome all enemies."

The Secretary of the Navy, Col. Frank Knox, sent the following telegram:

"The launching of the U. S. S. Iowa is a major event in the history of the United States Navy. This great man-of-war is the most powerful ship ever built in the Western Hemisphere. It is by far the biggest ever launched in the Americas, but it is significant for many reasons other than mere size. This ship bears the proud name of one of our greatest states, a name that has been borne with honor by other great fighting ships in former wars. You men who built the Iowa have reason to be proud. From the time her keel was laid until this moment, when she stands ready to take the water for the first time, you have worked hard and faithfully and well. You have created a magnificent ship, but she is not yet a fighting ship. This is a great moment but the truly triumphant moment will come only when, fully gunned and fitted, the Iowa joins the Fleet to fight for freedom. Let nothing delay that moment. Hasten it with every spark of resourcefulness and every ounce of energy. Victory for America many months from now may depend on a day or an hour saved in this very Yard. Speed the Iowa that it may add its power to the crushing force of a nation which is mighty in its righteous anger."

The U. S. S. Iowa is the fourth Navy ship to be so called, her predecessors having been a post Civil War wooden screw sloop; a battleship which saw service in the Spanish-American War, and was used as a training ship during the first World War, and another battleship which was scrapped before completion.

The first Iowa was originally the 3,200 ton U. S. S. Ammonoosuc which was started at the Boston Navy Yard in 1864 and finished at New York in 1867. The name was changed to Iowa on May 15, 1869, and a battery of 23 guns installed. Stricken from the Navy Register in 1882, the ship was sold on September 27, 1883 to Hubbel & Porter, Syracuse, N. Y., for \$44,605.00.

Authorized in 1892, the second Iowa was built by William Cramp & Sons, Philadelphia, Pa., launched March 28, 1896; and commissioned June 16, 1897. The \$3,010,000 vessel of 11,346 tons displacement carried a complement of forty-one officers and 789 men and mounted four 12-inch, eight 8-inch and four 4-inch guns. Within a year, she saw active service as flagship of Admiral Sampson's squadron. Later, joining Commodore Schley's flying squadron off Cienfuegos, Cuba, the sec-

ond Iowa did blockade duty off Santiago de Cuba from May 28 to July 2, 1898, and on July 3, was the first to sight approaching Spanish ships. She fired the first shot in the battle of Santiago and though struck several times, suffered no casualties. As a result of the engagement, the Iowa took aboard as prisoners of war Admiral Pascual Cervera, his son and officers and men of the Spanish gunboats Furor and Pluton, and Captain Eulate and officers and crew of the Spanish vessel Vizcaya. Captain Robley D. Evans of the Iowa declined to accept the sword of Captain Eulate who was wounded.

The second Iowa made several cruises in home and foreign waters from October 12, 1898 until May 13, 1914, when she was placed out of commission. The advent of World War I, however, saw her recommissioned on April 23, 1917 and after serving as receiving ship at Philadelphia for six months, she was sent to Hampton Roads, Va., remaining there for the duration of the war, training men for other ships of the Fleet, and doing guard duty at the entrance to Chesapeake Bay.

Again placed out of commission on March 31, 1919, her name was changed to Coast Battleship No. 4. She was used as a target and sunk March 22, 1923 and was stricken from the Navy list five days later. As she sank, the then Secretary of the Navy Denby, on board the U. S. S. Maryland, ordered the band to play the Star Spangled Banner while the national salute of 21 guns was fired. Almost 10,000 officers and men aboard the battleships Maryland, California, Pennsylvania, and Arizona manned the rails while those vessels, as a final tribute, circled the spot where the Iowa went down.

The third Iowa was authorized May 1, 1918 and the keel was laid at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Co., May 17, 1920. Construction was discontinued on this vessel, however, and she was scrapped in accordance with the terms of the Washington Treaty limiting naval armament, effective August, 1923. The third Iowa was to have been 684 feet in length, 105 feet in breadth and of 43,200 tons displacement. She was to

have carried a complement of 66 officers and 1,474 men and to have mounted twelve 16-inch 50 cal., sixteen 6-inch 53 cal., and four 3-inch 50 cal. (anti-aircraft) guns.

The commandant of the New York Navy Yard, Rear Admiral E. J. Marquart, in his address at the launching stated:

"Honored guests and fellow workers--welcome to you all. This is a proud and solemn hour in American Naval history. The greatest fighting ship that has ever challenged the foes of freedom waits but for her name and her Godspeed before she slides down the ways into the water to her mighty destiny.

"Battleships are not built in a day. Four hundred and twenty-nine thousand man-days were needed just to make design plans for this ship. Into her actual construction so far has gone the enormous total of 4,100,000 man-days. A battleship, more than any other handiwork of man, is a masterpiece of teamwork by many men of many diversified talents in many fields of activity. So today, we gaze at one of the supreme triumphs of man's ingenuity and skill. Never before, in the long history of shipbuilding, has there been anything to compare with this ship.

"To the thousands of shipworkers at New York Navy Yard, this great floating fortress towering above us, is our special pride and joy. We have worked together to build it, strong and true. The daily life of our whole Yard has been unified about its building, and it has been the common dedication of us all to a glorious goal. There has been high hope and inspiration in every look we have given her as she rose higher and higher during her construction. She has been our symbol of the brain and power of our mighty fighting Fleet and has made every worker feel more and more a real part of the Navy, with rivet hammers and torches and machines as his fighting weapons.

"We stand humble before it, but we are proud and happy on this its christening day. With you guests, we, too, gaze in awe, in wonderment, in speechless amazement, at our handiwork now bared in its entirety to see for the first time.

"The ship is not yet finished. Ahead lie more months of arduous labor before she will be ready to put to sea. But as this splendid man-of-war slides down the ways this morning, every one of us will feel that she typifies our glorious country in her streamlined massiveness, strength and fighting power. And with her launching, our Nation thunderously announces its own invincible power and dauntless will to fight until victory is ours, to finish a war which we did not start, but which we will surely end in the cause of peace and all that is right."

The State Department of History and Archives has, as a part of its valuable historical museum, the navy model of the second Iowa, which attracts attention among

many visitors. The Department also has the heavy metal headpiece of the ship and the commander's flag which floated over the ship.

The State gave to this battleship a fine silver dining service for the officers' mess, made specially for this purpose, the design being a suggestion of Iowa agriculture and industry. When it was decided that the battleship should be sunk, this silver service was presented to the State and is now on display in a prominent place in the State Historical museum.

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